TWO LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

Sir *Thomas Charles Bunbury*,

MEMBER of PARLIAMENT for the County of SUFFOLK, in *February* 1781,

PREVIOUS TO THE

Late SUBSCRIPTIONS

RAISED BY THE

Noblemen and Gentlemen of that COUNTY,

FOR BUILDING A

SHIP of the LINE for the PUBLIC SERVICE.

With NOTES and ADDITIONS.

By a FREEHOLDER of *Suffolk*.

DONCASTER:

Printed for the AUTHOR, by C. PLUMMER.

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TWO LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

Sir Thomas Clarke Hanbury,

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT for the County of

WORCESTER, in February 1781,

RELATIVE TO THE

late SUBSCRIPTIONS

RAISED BY THE

Noblemen and Gentlemen of that

COUNTY,

FOR BUILDING A

SHIP of the LINE for the

PUBLIC SERVICE.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PRINTED for the AUTHOR, by C. BLOUNER.

TO

Sir *Thomas Charles Bunbury.*

AS in your addreſs to the free-holders of the county of Suffolk, previous to the late general election, you have declared yourſelf a friend to that mode of war, which by reducing our military,

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may enable us to augment our naval eſtabliſhment; permit me therefore, as one of your conſtituents, to dedicate to you the following letters, which ſuggeſt ideas calculated, not only to increaſe the naval eſtabliſhment of Great Britain, but likewiſe to fix it upon ſuch principles as are permanent and laſting.

In the following ſheets, Sir, I have alſo ſhewn, that it is equally neceſſary to introduce the ſame fixed ideas of ſupport into the eſtabliſhment of the Britiſh army; ſince it

is

is only from the co-operation of their powers, that our liberty and property can be ſecured to us, both at home and abroad.

When the ſtrength and reſources of Great Britain have been repreſented of late by ſome men to all Europe, as if ſhe were entirely exhauſted, and in her wane of political importance; when our enemies both at home and abroad, have endeavoured to paint her as in her laſt gaſp of military effort,—it then becomes the duty, Sir, of every real well-wiſher to his country, to un-

maſk theſe repreſentations, if falſe, and in the language of your Addreſs to the county of Suffolk, " unbi- " aſſed by ſelfiſh or party motives, to " be ever ſtudious to ſupport ſuch " meaſures as appear moſt conducive " to the proſperity of our country, " whether theſe meaſures are propo- " ſed by the miniſters of the crown " or their opponents."

The following letters lay claim to no particular merit, in refinement of language and compoſition; though in point of matter, they deſerve the ſerious conſideration of

of every man of judgment in this country. They contain ſome proofs, that however Great Britain may be exhauſted in her public reſources of taxation, ſtill it is in her power to brace the ſinews of her naval and military arm, ſo as to repel all the attacks of her natural enemies. If the improvements, Sir, ſuggeſted in theſe letters, for the ſupport of the navy and army, are adopted by government, whatever may be the future fate of the public debts of this country, ſtill we ſhall preſerve the reputation and reality, of being powerful both by

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ſea and land. It is now high time, that this circumſtance ſhould be well conſidered by the political well-wiſhers of the Britiſh conſtitution; becauſe when the bubble of public credit breaks, as it may ere long, in the preſent increaſing ratio of the expences of war, we may, by ſuch precautions as are here propoſed, prevent the transfer of our maritime ſovereignty to other nations, who at preſent only wiſh for ſome ſuch internal ſhock happening to the credit of Great Britain, as a *coup-de-grace* to her naval ſtrength and reſources.

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I have the ſatisfaction, Sir, to ſubſcribe myſelf *One of your Conſtituents*, believing your parliamentary conduct will always be regulated by the noble ſentiments contained in your addreſs to the county of Suffolk.

LETTER

LETTER I.

SIR,

IN the hiſtory of Great Britain, it is a point of the greateſt importance, to aſcertain thoſe cauſes, which have brought her to any degree of eminence, above other nations, in the conſtitutions of her commercial, civil, and warlike eſtabliſhments. The following extract

tract from Sir John Dalrymple's Review of the political ſtate of England before the reſtoration, points them out in ſo maſterly a manner, that I beg leave to quote it, Sir, as applicable to the preſent ſituation of affairs in America, and, I hope, prophetic of the future." "The "civil wars of James the Second, (ſays Sir "John,) mark that ſtate of diſorder into which "high-ſpirited nations are plunged, before "they can accompliſh a regular ſyſtem of li-"berty, or are ſubject to a regular ſyſtem of "prerogative.

"It is a characteriſtic of Providence, which "human wiſdom ſhould not however attempt "to imitate, to employ apparent evils for the "attainment of real good, and to render diſ-"ſenſion, as well as union, beneficial to man-"kind.

"The Britiſh nation has made its way thro' "many dangers and troubles: the parties, by "which it has been agitated, may have, each

"in

" in their turns, run to extremes: but the re-
" ſult of the whole has been a conſtitution,
" which by ſecuring to all orders of men the
" rights of mankind, has never been equalled
" in any age or nation. Nor is this bleſſing to
" be valued for itſelf, more than for the nati-
" onal vigour and character which have been
" acquired in the attainment of it. Men are
" generally formed by their occupations and
" purſuits: accuſtomed to important and peri-
" lous occaſions, and engaged in the worthieſt
" purſuits, thoſe of equal juſtice and freedom,
" they become, like the ſubjects of Britain,
" high-minded, capable and brave. From the
" continual attention to public affairs the people
" have acquired a public and generous ſpirit,
" from the vigour and confidence of men in-
" ured to affairs; and ſecured in their rights,
" they have derived their ſucceſs in every
" branch of ſcience, and of every liberal and
" mechanical art, making manifeſt to all this
" animating truth; that the genius of nations
" is always in proportion to their ſpirit. We
" are

‘ are apt to regret as an evil the diſputes and “ agitations of a free people ; forgetting that, “ man’s nature being active, he muſt continue “ to act or ceaſe to exiſt.”

Thus, Sir, to take off the edge of national animoſity and prejudice, we ſhould regard the preſent conteſt between Great Britain and the American colonies, like certain diſeaſes in the life of an individual, that, as in the animal nature of man there are peccant humours that require to be carried off to improve his conſtitution ; ſo, in the general hiſtory of nations, their public jealouſies and animoſities muſt, ſome time or other, have vent in the channel of war, until dear bought experience teaches them the proper conceſſions to be made to one another, as the beſt cement of peace and tranquillity. The moſt unprejudiced and impartial manner, therefore, to conſider the merit and demerit of the American war, is to regard it as a queſtion of dominion and right, that muſt have been agitated in ſome particular period of the hiſtory of

of both nations. In this point of view, it is much better for Great Britain, that it began before the year 1780, than in any after period. It is a certain fact, that the exertions of military ſtrength that Great Britain and America, have made againſt one another, would have been ſufficient, had they been united, to have ſtripped the French and Spaniards of every foreign ſettlement they are now in poſſeſſion of. It is likewiſe a certain fact, that Great Britain has given to Ireland every indulgence in point of trade, that America can in juſtice require. A proper conſideration of this, together with the above particulars, ſhould teach them both to unite their arms, as in 1759. As we all ſpeak the ſame language, and breathe the ſame ſpirit of liberty, in our ideas of religion and government, we are much more likely to remain laſting friends, when once reconciled, than if diſſimilar in theſe reſpects. The preſent connexion between France and America can never be of a laſting nature; conſidering the difference between their republican and arbitrary

bitrary principles of government. I ſhall prove, therefore, in the ſequel of theſe letters, that the American colonies have every motive, both of intereſt and fear, to induce them to accede to terms of union with Great Britain and Ireland, in preference to any other power in Europe:—1ſt, Conſidering the ſimilarity in their ideas of government: 2dly, Conſidering the importance of the places in America, now in the poſſeſſion of Great Britain.

In an empire, compoſed as the Britiſh, of countries detached and at a diſtance from one another, there ſeems to be a great jealouſy of the parent country, interfering in the internal taxation of the other component parts of it. This circumſtance will be made fully evident to us, when diveſting ourſelves of prejudice and party principles, we inquire into the reaſons that gave riſe to theſe unlucky diſturbances with the American colonies. I dare ſay, Sir, your private opinion coincides with mine; that party diviſions in this country, have made both factions

tions in it, objects of military ridicule, to our natural enemies and the various colonies, of America. During the emulous and contentious claims of private intereſt and advantage, they have loſt ſight of a judicious direction of what military and naval ſtrength has been ſet in motion, ſince the commencement of this American conteſt. I may, in oppoſition to the political conſequences, flowing from ſuch conduct, beg leave to obſerve, that the plans propoſed in theſe letters, in their conſequences, tend not only to remove theſe baneful effects of party factions in this country, by calling off their attention to public ſpirited plans of naval and military enterpriſe; but likewiſe, ſuggeſt thoſe honourable and general ideas, which tend to union and reconciliation with Ireland and America.

It has long been a common and hackneyed obſervation, that the excellency of the conſtitution of England conſiſts, in having fixed laws, and that moſt of her civil and commercial advantages

tages flow from this ſource. If this be really the caſe, I ſee no reaſon, Sir, why the ſame boaſted advantage ſhould not be introduced into the eſtabliſhments, both of the navy and army of the Britiſh empire. To do this, ſome pervading principles of taxation ſhould be fixed upon; ſuch as are applicable to all the component parts of it. For inſtance, was the land-tax in Great Britain invariably appropriated for the ſupport of the navy, and the ſame idea of taxation, propoſed to all the other parts of the Britiſh empire; I make not the leaſt doubt, that the Iriſh, and Americans, and the inhabitants of our ſettlements in the Eaſt and Weſt-Indies would all chearfully conſent to ſuch a mode of taxation; each country reciprocally binding the other, in ſuch an act. The tax there propoſed, viz: that of the preſent land tax, is the moſt productive of all taxes, and at the ſame time, the moſt certain. It may, therefore, be fairly preſumed, that this idea of common and general taxation would be acceded to by all the component parts of the empire, from

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the popularity of the idea; ſince the navy has ever been eſteemed the bulwark of it. Other general taxes ſhould in the ſame manner be appropriated invariably, for the ſupport of our foreign garriſons ſuch as Gibraltar, &c. &c. It is now high time that this queſtion ſhould be well weighed by the political well-wiſhers of this country, viz. What general plan of taxation will be the moſt popular in ſuch an empire as the Britiſh? The conſequences flowing from the one here propoſed are as follow:

1ſt. The invariable appropriation of certain taxes for the naval and military exigencies of the Britiſh empire, would remove every future cauſe of diſcontent and jealouſy of the mother country both in Ireland and America. When the grants of public money are invariably appropriated, then every idea of embezzlement is removed: ſince the commiſſioners of accounts appointed by Great Britain, Ireland, America, and every other part of the Britiſh empire, would then have only to inſpect and ſuperintend un-

der the ultimate controul of parliament, a juſt and honeſt appropriation of the money raiſed for the ſupport of the Britiſh navy and army.

2dly. The longer peace continues the more theſe funds will increaſe, to provide for the exigencies of war. The increaſing ſtate of them will therefore not only ſupport the commercial credit of the Britiſh empire, but deter other nations from declaring war againſt it.

3dly. The great point of defect in the conſtitution of Great Britain is this, that the violence of parties in ſtate-matters obliges government to make uſe of a certain ſecret argument to ſecure to its intereſt a majority of votes in a certain ſenate. Was not this done, perhaps the neceſſary ſupplies in time of war would be withheld; ſince to obtain their ſeats, they are obliged to make uſe of the above ſecret argument, ſo they expect the ſame return from government. Nothing would tend ſo much to cure this evil, and to introduce a fundamental

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and conſtitutional remedy for it than a fixed and invariable appropriation of certain taxes, for the various naval and military exigencies of the ſtate under the proper controul of parliament. When ſuch a ſcheme takes place, the neceſſity of b*****y and c***p***n is, in great meaſure ſuperſeded, the executive hands of government in time of war are ſtrengthened, and the plans of national finance and œconomy propoſed by Mr. Pultney and Mr. Burke are then ſet in motion.

4thly. If all the circumſtances and conſequences of the above propoſed plan of taxation are properly conſidered, I think there is a fair proſpect in future of eaſing England of that accumulation of taxes, ſhe has been ſubject to during former wars in defence of the Britiſh empire. Beſides the idea of a naval union in the Britiſh empire may counteract, and greatly defeat all the dangerous conſequences that may ariſe to her boaſted ſovereignty of the ſea from

the preſent naval coalition of the northern powers of Europe *.

I ſhall conclude, Sir, this part of my letter, with an important and ſerious obſervation; that the

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* 1ſt. The conduct of Ireland lately in voting 20,000 men for the ſupport of the Britiſh navy, points out the propriety of the principles of national union ſuggeſted in theſe letters When upon general principles of liberty it is left in ſuch an empire as the Britiſh to each country to make the moſt of its natural ſituation in point of commerce, a naval and military union muſt become then the darling object of all the component parts of it.

The preſent noble reſolution of the county of Suffolk and of Sir JAMES LOWTHER in building two ſhips of the line for the public ſervice, ſhews the real national attachment of this country to the navy both in collective bodies of men and opulent individuals. In how much a larger ſphere would ſuch national ſpirit act was the land-tax invariably appropriated to the ſupport of the navy. Upon ſuch a ſuppoſition the channel would then be cut out for public benevolence to flow in, each country and part of the empire would be oppoſed to another in point of public honour and emulation.

the whole political writings of Lord Bolingbroke diſplay the advantages of the plan of appropriation here propoſed. This eminent writer with all the elegance of Cicero, and the patriotic fire of Sidney or Ruſſell, oppoſed in its infancy the preſent corrupted ſcheme of funding; the effects of which, if not counteracted by proper ſalutary meaſures, will entail an increaſing ratio of curſe upon the liberty and property of all Britiſh ſubjects.

Having now, Sir, pointed out the fund that ought to be appropriated for the ſupport of the Britiſh navy; I proceed to lay before you a few looſe thoughts upon the preſent method of impreſs for the ſea-ſervice of Great Britain.

The preſent method of impreſs for the ſea-ſervice of this country may admit of great improvements in point of enforcement and regularity, through all the Britiſh empire. If the board of admiralty wiſh to man the navy expeditely, they ſhould ſpecify in the gazette the

number

number of ſeamen and landſmen wanted for government-ſervice; 2dly. They ſhould likewiſe lay a ſtrict embargo upon all the ports of Great Britain until the demands of government for ſeamen are ſatisfied. The ſame idea ſhould be extended *mutatis mutandis* to Ireland, and all other parts of naval importance, in the Britiſh dominions.

This method would oblige the merchants and maſters of ſhips in every port of Great Britain and her other poſſeſſions, to aſſiſt government as much as poſſible in procuring men both by bounties and their own perſonal influence, becauſe the embargo upon their trade will not be taken off until the number of men ſpecified in the gazette is procured. According to the preſent method of impreſs the ports are open, the maſters of ſhips are at liberty to go to ſea, if their ſhips crews can elude the vigilance of the preſs-gangs. But if they were ſhut during the impreſs for goverment ſervice, the ſeamen would be under the neceſſity from the want of bread to enter

enter on board of the men of war. When the number of ſeamen ſpecified in the gazette is obtained, all impreſs ſhould ceaſe, and the public promiſe of government ſhould be kept ſacred; that no impreſs ſhall take place again, until proper notice is given of it in the public gazette. It is evident this method of manning the navy would cauſe much leſs ſtagnation in trade than the one now in uſe. According to the preſent method of impreſſing ſeamen the merchants have no intereſt in aſſiſting government, ſince the impreſs never ceaſes during the continuance of the war. Whereas by the preſent propoſal of ſpecifying in the gazette the number of ſeamen wanted for manning the navy, every conſiderable ſea-port in Great-Britain and Ireland ſenſible of the conſequences of an embargo upon their ſhipping, would ſoon know the exact quota of men they ought to contribute when the demand is made from government. The ſociety of watermen in the port of London is a caſe in point, who upon the eve of every war

ſend

ſend out five hundred or a thouſand men for the uſe of the navy.

To man the navy quickly the impreſs ſhould be general over the kingdom, or particular country where it is enforced. The conſtables of each hundred ſhould be obliged to examine that there are no ſeamen ſkulking about in their reſpective diſtricts. When there is a hot preſs upon the maritime parts of the kingdom, the ſeamen always retire into the country thinking to conceal themſelves. It is this idea of concealment therefore that prevents them from entering into the king's ſervice. But was this removed, they would find no aſylum, and would find it their intereſt to enter on board the men of war as ſoon as poſſible. The preſent method of that ſervice is attended with the following inconveniences. 1ſt. To the merchant, from the ſtagnation it puts to trade. 2dly. To the ſeamen, becauſe from the idea of concealment, they fly to the country and are thrown out of employment. 3dly. To government becauſe they do not man their ſhips near ſo quick

as

as they would do, were they to ſpecify to the merchants the number of men wanted for public ſervice, and extend the preſs to the internal parts of the kingdom as well as the ſea-coaſt. This might be eaſily done by making it a pecuniary penalty to any houſe-holder, inn-keeper, or maſter of a public houſe to harbour a ſeaman knowingly, without giving information to a neighbouring juſtice of the peace or to the conſtables of the hundred. Upon annexing a penalty to the default, there ſhould likewiſe be a more conſiderable reward for information than the preſent. At the ſame time it is a circumſtance that merits particular obſervation, that ſeamen deſerve every encouragement, that can poſſibly be given to them in this country. They ſhould therefore have a legal demand beſides their allowance from the eſtabliſhment of Greenwich upon their reſpective pariſhes for a certain annual penſion, increaſing in the ratio of time paſſed in the king's ſervice. So uſeful and honourable ſubjects ſhould meet with every encouragement and ſupport, that the conſtitution

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and reſoures of the Britiſh empire can poſſibly afford.

As a further ſupport to the Britiſh navy there ſhould be in every pariſh an annual meeting of the principal inhabitants, to prick down the names of what men can be ſpared from it for the ſervice of the navy, ſuch meeting to be compoſed of gentlemen of landed property or eminent farmers. This propoſal would remove the following objection to the late impreſs-act when any one is brought before the commiſſioners appointed by that act, being ſo few in number they are afraid to act from dread of injury to their perſons or property. This objection would be removed when it is made a general act of the principal inhabitants of each pariſh, to ſend off for the ſervice of the navy thoſe idle fellows and vagabonds, who are the bane and peſt of the neighbourhood where they reſide *.

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* At a late meeting of the ſheriff, grand jury, and other gentlemen of the county of Devonſhire it was reſolved to give additional bounties, to raiſe men for the ſea-ſervice.

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The proper general queſtion, Sir, that comprehends every eſſential to the ſupport of the navy, is as follows:

That in the articles of timber, cordage, pitch and tar, and in every other particular, required in the building, and fitting out of a ſhip of war for ſea, Great Britain ought to render herſelf as independent of foreign nations as poſſible: Under this title, the firſt thing that ought to engage the real attention of parliament, is the preſent and future ſtate of growing timber in this country, fit for the various purpoſes of ſhip-building:

They ſeemed to be of opinion that men were more wanted than ſhips at preſent. Whatever may be the preſent ſtate of that queſtion it is here proper to obſerve, that the meaſures recommended in theſe letters to the notice of government when adopted, will reverſe that ſtate of the caſe totally for the future.

So that ſuppoſing the counties of Great Britain and Ireland according to their reſources, to follow the example of the county of Suffolk and Sir JAMES LOWTHER, there will be no want of men to ſupply both navy and army, when pariſhes are called upon by government to afford thoir reſpective quotas for both ſervices.

building: That ſuch attention is now highly neceſſary, is evident from the following ſtate of facts.

Some years ago, when the Eaſt-India company propoſed to increaſe the ſcantlings and timbers of the ſhipping employed in their trade, it was oppoſed by government, as if there was not growing timber of a large ſize in Great Britain, ſufficient for the various purpoſes of the royal navy. This oppoſition on the part of government proves the following circumſtances.

1ſt. That ſuch oppoſition was to no purpoſe, becauſe, though it ultimately was meant, to limit the ſale of large timber to the navy board; however at the ſame time it laid no reſtraint upon private individuals, concerning the appropriation of ſuch, to the various uſes of agriculture, houſe-building, &c. &c. &c.

2dly. Such ſuppoſed deficiency in regard to large ſized timber ſhews, how neceſſary it is, that government ſhould order a general ſurvey to

to be made into the preſent ſtate of oak and fir timber, in every county of Great Britain and Ireland. When the ſum total of timber, now fit for ſhip-building is known, the proper *data* are then given whereby they may calculate how much ought to be appropriated, to the preſent purpoſes of the navy: and what future reſervation of tenths ſhould be made under ſuch regulations, as the wiſdom of parliament may deem moſt conſiſtent with every conſtitutional idea of public and private right. The *univerſal* exercise of ſuch a right by the government of France, ſhews that a *partial* adoption of it ſhould take place in Great Britain, if her navy is any longer to be regarded as the bulwak of her empire.

2*dly*. As the houſe of commons lately ordered an account of the number and tonnage of ſhips employed in the Eaſt India trade to be laid before them; and as in conſequence thereof, certain unſucceſsful overtures or propoſitions were made by the board of admiralty to the ſhips huſbands, concerning the converting of ſuch ſhips into

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ſhips of force.——I intend here to prove, Sir, that the property and management of the ſhipping employed in the trade of the Eaſt-India company, ought to be taken into the hands of government upon the future renewal of the charter of the Eaſt India company; or ſooner, if matters can be arranged upon an equitable footing, with thoſe intereſted in the conſequences of the propoſed alteration.

The object of transferring to government the property and management of the ſhipping, may be accompliſhed in two different ways.

1ſt. By immediate purchaſe of the ſhipping employed in that trade; or 2dly. By government's building new ſhips for the uſe of the company, as faſt as the preſent ſhips belonging to the ſhips huſbands have completed their proper number of voyages.

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The following Reaſons point out the public Utility and Neceſſity of ſuch a Meaſure.

1ſt. According to the liſt of ſhips in the ſervice of the Eaſt-India company in the year 1781—they amounted to 73 ſhips, whereof 53 ſhips were then abroad, beſides 20 ſhips, that were at home belonging to that ſervice. Therefore ſuppoſing the number of 55 ſhips upon an average to be neceſſary for carrying on the buſineſs of the Eaſt India company; the plan of rendering theſe ſhips fit for the purpoſes of war, as well as thoſe of commerce, will add to the Britiſh navy a force, equal to 55 ſail of ſhips; each of which by a future change of ſcantling and conſtruction may be made capable of carrying 50 or 60 guns upon any public emergency.

2dly. In the propoſal made lately by the board of admiralty to the ſhips huſbands of the Eaſt-India company, there were three different intereſts to be included, viz. That of government—

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the ſhips huſbands—and the proprietors intereſt——In ſuch a ſituation it is improbable that parties ſhould ever come to any agreement, as upon the one hand the ſhips huſbands were ſolicited by government, and upon the other by the directors of the Eaſt India company. When the renewal therefore of the charter of the Eaſt India company comes before parliament, the chief pillar of agreement ought to be founded upon this great ſupport of the naval ſtrength of Great Britain, viz. That government ſhould take into its own hands the future building and direction of the ſhipping employed in the Eaſt India ſervice.

3dly. By government's taking into their own hands the property and direction of the Eaſt India ſhipping—All the *trading capital* of private individuals, now ſunk in ſuch branch of traffick, will be thrown into other channels of commercial ſpeculation.—The preſent difficulty of finding owners for ſuch ſhipping, proves the neceſſity of the interference of government.

4thly.

4thly. When the property of the ſhipping employed in the Eaſt India trade belongs to government, the directors of that company may be aſſured, that the board of admiralty will be more attentive, to the appointment of ſtrong convoys for the protection of their trade, than they are at preſent, when ſuch property belongs to private individuals.

5thly. In time of peace, many of the men of war that formerly uſed to lie rotting in ordinary, may be employed according to the above propoſition, in the carrying trade of the Eaſt India company.

6thly. When the property and management of the Eaſt India ſhipping is veſted in the hands of government, the rank and employment of its officers will be more regular and conſtant, than it is at preſent, from the variety of intereſts among the ſhips huſbands, now concerned in their ſhipping.

7thly. By the preſent ſhips huſbands it may be objected, that government will make a job of the carrying trade of the Eaſt India company.

To this ſuppoſition, it is a full, laconick, and ſatisfactory reply, that the revenue of government depends ſo much upon the duties, paid upon the exports and imports of the Eaſt India company, the more regularly things are managed in the ſhipping department, it is the better for both parties.

N. B. The above liſt of ſhipping, outward and homeward bound, in 1781, is taken from the public liſts, printed by the Eaſt India company.

3*dly*. As the ſhips in the Greenland trade, are employed but three or four months in their fishing voyage, might they not in time of war be fitted out as privateers, or guard ſhips, during the remainder of the year? The Dutch, in their wars with England, preceding the acceſſion of James the Second, did ſo; and this circumſtance enabled them, notwithſtanding their repeated loſſes by ſea, to fit out ſuch powerful fleets. Every propoſal of this nature, Sir, that tends to ſtrengthen then our naval force at home, enables government to ſend abroad our line of battle ſhips.

LETTER

LETTER II.

SIR,

I Beg leave to ſubmit to your candid conſideration the following ſheets, which point out the preſent neceſſity of obliging each pariſh in Great Britain, and her other dominions, to afford a certain quota of men to recruit the old eſtabliſhment of her regular army. To the pa-

rent country of ſo extenſive an empire as the Britiſh, having poſſeſſions in every part of the globe, many external circumſtances muſt happen in the courſe of human affairs, which in a certain degree muſt make her alter her internal conſtitution, ſo as to ſecure thoſe diſtant poſſeſſions. The queſtion therefore in regard to theſe internal alterations turns upon this nice pivot, will they when they take place be of more advantage than diſadvantage to her; or in other words is a ſmall internal inconvenience to be borne, for the ſake of a great external bleſſing, which enables hundreds of families to live at home in the parent ſtate, in eaſe and affluence? When we conſider then the preſent ſtate of affairs in America and the Weſt Indies, the neceſſity of adopting the following meaſures will be fully juſtified, when tried by the above ſtandard. In every country there are but two ways in which the individuals of it can pay the tribute of military ſervice due to the government they are under—viz. either by their own perſonal ſervice, or by paying an able ſubſtitute. Whatever arguments therefore are applicable to individuals

dividuals in regard to this point, are ſtill ſtronger when applied to collective bodies of men. The following propoſal can never therefore be objected to by the inhabitants of any pariſh, as fundamentally inconſiſtent with the ideas of Britiſh liberty; when the above alternative is offered by government to them, the choice or preference is an act of their own will.

It was a maxim, Sir, obſerved by the Romans in their conqueſts, that they adopted every improvement in the art of war, wherein they thought themſelves excelled by their enemy. This circumſtance raiſed that nation to a greater pitch of greatneſs, than any other in ancient hiſtory. Far from adhering obſtinately like other nations to the ſyſtem of war they were taught by their forefathers, they prudently varied it according to the nature of the reſiſtance they met with, and in their progreſſive conqueſt of the then known world rolled on like a ball of ſnow gathering ſtrength from every nation they left behind.

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When we ſee that Rome even the former miſtreſs of the world, never bluſhed to own herſelf capable of being taught, ought not ſo illuſtrious an example to teach Great Britain, that ſhe may confeſs herſelf ſtill under the corrective rod of experience? As the French have of late adopted many improvements from the Britiſh navy, it becomes us therefore to examine what we can glean from them. The moſt important that preſents itſelf to our conſideration, is one introduced into France by Lewis the 14th, who obliged each pariſh of his kingdom to afford a number of recruits for the army, according to its number of inhabitants fit to carry arms. Thus in France the military exigency of the ſtate is immediately ſupplied, and the demand of recruits for the army is never felt as a grievance, ſince it is ſo equally divided among ſo many pariſhes. In Great Britain were they to adopt this plan, it would greatly ſtrengthen the executive hands of government, and enable it to anticipate many evils that may happen to this country upon the commencement of a war. As the conſtitution of this country is ſuch, that

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it empowers naval officers to man their ſhips immediately by impreſſing men, it is certainly a ridiculous circumſtance, that the army is not put upon as advantageous a footing. It is only from the co-operation of their powers, that either our own ſecurity at home can be preſerved, our enemies foreign ſettlements attacked to advantage, or our own defended when invaded.

It has been often agitated as a point of ſpeculation, whether or not the Britiſh army would be better ſupplied with recruits, by obliging each pariſh to turn out a proportional quota of men, than by the preſent method of beating up. In my opinion it admits of no doubt, that the firſt mentioned method is preferable to the latter, and will be productive of more general good to the Britiſh ſervice. The difficulty of contriving an effectual plan for recruiting the army, conſiſts in the following circumſtance; that it ſhould be calculated ſo as to fix the men as volunteers in the ſervice and not drive them like brutes upon compulſion. A certain degree

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of compulſion is abſolutely neceſſary to ſecure a certain return of men to the ſecretary at war, but it ſhould be of ſuch a nature, as to fall more upon public bodies of men than upon individuals.

The ſecretary at war therefore ſhould be required annually or half-yearly to ſpecify to the lord lieutenant and ſheriff of each county, what is the proportion of men, they are to afford for the ſervice of the enſuing year. This he may eaſily determine from a preceding year's account, given in at the quarter-ſeſſions by the church-wardens of each pariſh upon oath, of the number of men fit to carry arms in each county or pariſh. Thus the quota of recruits for the regulars would be certified to the deputy lieutenants, and by them the allotment of men for each pariſh. The pariſhes muſt then by premiums procure volunteers if practicable, if not, they muſt ballot for the ſervice as in the caſe of the militia. The pariſh premiums to volunteers ſhould be paid out of the poor rates, which is the moſt equal pariſh ceſs extant. The

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alternative of giving bounties for volunteers, or to risk by ballot a personal service, is a stimulus, that will compel parishes to hold out sufficient premiums to invite volunteers into the service. Establishing county regiments would accelerate the raising of parish volunteers *.

To consider this subject therefore in the proper manner it ought to be, I shall proceed, Sir, to treat of it in the following manner: 1st. State the public and private inconveniences of the present method of beating up. 2dly. Contrast to it the public and present necessity of the personal service here required.

The first circumstance that presents itself to our consideration, in stating the public disadvantages of the present method of recruiting the British army, is the uncertainty of the returns of men, from the officers upon that service

* This measure seems to be now adopted by government, of fixing the recruiting districts of such and such regiments to particular counties or divisions of a county.

vice to the ſecretary at war. Thus according to the preſent method, the exigencies of the ſtate can never be provided for in that regular manner they ought to be. It will always be the caſe, Sir, and may it ever remain ſo, that the inhabitants of the Britiſh empire will reaſon freely, concerning the propriety or impropriety of the meaſures purſued by their governors. If they approve of them, (in the language of addreſs,) they will ſupport them with their lives and fortunes. If they diſapprove, government will find great difficulty in recruiting the army. From the number of news papers now circulating in every alehouſe of Great-Britain and Ireland, the common people in general form their political opinions, from the repreſentation of public affairs given in the republican papers, now diſſeminated ſo univerſally over every part of theſe kingdoms. This obſervation is well verified in the beginning of this American war, when government found ſo much difficulty in recruiting the old eſtabliſhment of the army, that they were obliged to

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hire troops from Germany, and Lord Barrington from the abſolute neceſſity of the ſervice, was compelled to add twelve new regiments to the old eſtabliſhment. Commiſſions were granted to the officers on condition of their raiſing a certain quota of men, and the high bounties given were the only inducement, that could have brought ſo many men to liſt at that time. From the particulars mentioned above it may be juſtly inferred, that the public ſervice would be carried on more expeditely and uniformly, by obliging each pariſh to turn out a certain number of men according to the exigency of the ſtate.

It may be mentioned too as a private inconvenience of the preſent method of enliſting men, that no attention is paid to this circumſtance, whether or not a man has a large family; or whether he is a manufacturer, the loſs of whom is a detriment to trade. All theſe circumſtances prove that it is bad policy in any commercial ſtate, to allow an indiſcriminate kidnapping of

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men for its military ſervice, when certainly better can be procured by ballot, or from the deliberate choice of the gentlemen of each pariſh. There is one circumſtance which recommends ſtrongly the plan here propoſed, that the demand for men falls ſo lightly upon the different pariſhes, as not to be felt as a grievance. Whereas in the late mode of raiſing men in Scotland for the new levies, more particularly in the Highlands, ſome diſtricts were almoſt depopulated, and many of the beſt manufacturers of the Weſt of Scotland ſwept away to America, where one day or other they will eſtabliſh thoſe very manufactures they uſed to export to that country. When the common people of England can earn a ſhilling, one ſhilling and ſixpence, or two ſhillings a day by labour, it is ridiculous to ſuppoſe, they will prefer ſtarving upon ſixpence, which is the neat pay of a common ſoldier. The high price of labour alſo paid of late by the farmers and maſter manufacturers to their workmen is another reaſon, why the recruiting ſervice has not ſucceeded ſo well in England as

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it uſed to do. Though many have manifeſted a laudable and public ſpirit in regard to home defence, yet they are not at all inclined to hazard their lives abroad. This averſion to ſerving in the army abroad, is growing ſtronger and ſtronger every day among the common people of this country, government muſt therefore adopt ſome plan ſimilar to the one here propoſed to recruit the Britiſh army effectually. When our natural enemies upon the continent of Europe have ſuch immenſe ſtanding armies, and are at the ſame time equal, if not ſuperior to us by ſea in number of ſhips and men, it is ſurely the height of folly and madneſs not to put our army upon an equal reſpectable footing. Without we do it ſoon, we may be ſtript of moſt of our foreign ſettlements, as we have loſt ſeveral valuable ſugar iſlands already. All theſe loſſes are owing to the preſent defective plan of recruiting the Britiſh army. So far from government being able to ſend a ſufficient number of men to garriſon our ſugar iſlands, they had not even men enough to anſwer the demands of the A-

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merican ſervice. Thus the hands of government muſt always be tied up in regard to military enterpriſe, as long as the preſent mode of recruiting the army continues in force. Until it is altered, we can ſtrike no blow to advantage upon the commencement of a war, nor can we parry one effectually when aimed at us. May the experience we have gained in this American conteſt, teach us to adopt ſuch plans, as will bring the whole ſtrength of the Britiſh empire to bear effectually upon our natural enemies. Procraſtination in military operations muſt be the ruin of any country, when put to ſuch immenſe expence as Great Britain is at preſent, in the maintenance of fleets and armies, in diſtant parts of the globe. It is ſuperfluous to point out any more, the many public advantages that would reſult from the plan here ſuggeſted, if properly enforced by act of parliament. France and Spain, Sir, are too ſenſible of the defect of the Britiſh ſervice, in regard to the idea of raiſing men expeditely as volunteers. They muſt know therefore, it muſt require

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ſome conſiderable time, before our army is ſo recruited and diſciplined, as to oppoſe their veteran troops in the field. Beſides, the more the above powers increaſe in maritime ſtrength, it becomes every day more neceſſary, that the Britiſh empire ſhould attend to the moſt effectual and moſt patriotic means of keeping up a reſpectable ſtanding force for her defence, both at home and abroad.

From a view therefore, Sir, of the number of men employed in the land-ſervice, during each year of the Duke of Marlborough's wars; ſpecifying the killed and wounded—from the ſame view of the war between the year 1740 and 1750—from the ſame view alſo of the laſt war, we ſhall be enabled to obtain the exact mean of the number of men required for the Britiſh army, during the moſt preſſing exigency of war; and we ſhall be enabled to aſcertain the number of recruits that may be required in any future war. Thus to conclude, this mean aſcertained from the three great continental wars,

wars, that Great Britain has been engaged in upon the theatre of Europe, may very properly be oppoſed to the mean of men taken during this American continental war; which will exhibit a curious contraſt to the military ſpeculators both of our own and foreign nations.

Conſidering the powerful enemies confederated now againſt this country, it becomes a point of greater importance every day, to lay before the public every idea or plan, that is likely to induce ſeamen or landſmen to enter into our naval or military ſervice. The two moſt operative circumſtances to promote this, are certain ideas of preſent encouragement and future ſupport in old age. In regard to the former I am confident, that in no European ſervice either by ſea or land, are men better clothed and fed than in the Britiſh ſervice. The deficiency or fault conſiſts in our not having proper and adequate ideas of future ſupport for our ſeamen and ſoldiers, increaſing in the ratio of the length of time ſpent by them in the ſervice

of their country. To do this, the various funds of Greenwich and Chelſea hoſpitals ſhould be thrown into one general fund, from which annual penſions ſhould be paid to ſeamen and ſoldiers, increaſing according to the number of years they have ſerved, or the wounds they have received. This penſion ſhould only be in part, the reſidue to be made up by pariſh penſions, under controul of the deputy lieutenants of each county. This method of providing for old ſick and maimed ſailors and ſoldiers would ſave much money, now laid out in the maintenance of Greenwich and Chelſea hoſpitals; as great part of the money granted by parliament for the ſupport of the old men, is conſumed by the officers of the hoſpitals, and in repairing the buildings. An old ſoldier or ſailor would live with much more comfort, when he has his reſidence in his own pariſh among his relations and former neighbours, and receive a more ample maintenance than he does at preſent, according to the eſtabliſhment of either of the above hoſpitals.

The political and military inferences from the above propoſed plan for recruiting the Britiſh army, are as follow:

1ſt. By obliging each pariſh to afford a proportional quota of men for the ſervice of the regular army, it will be eſtabliſhed as a point of public honour and emulation through all the extent of the Britiſh dominions, which diſtrict ſhall ſupply the Britiſh army with the ableſt and beſt-bodied recruits.

2dly. It will prevent that influx of new rank into the Britiſh army, which has of late taken place, ſo much to the diſſatisfaction of the honoured veterans of that ſervice, by ſuperſeding entirely the neceſſity of raiſing new corps: In doing which ſuch high bounties have been given, as will in the long-run leave the ſtandards of the old regiments deſerted, and ruin the recruiting ſervice ſo much in general, that the riches of Crœſus would ſcarce be adequate to the purpoſe of recruiting the Britiſh army.

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The laſt inference is the moſt important of all—That in calling forth the different pariſhes through the whole extent of the Britiſh dominions to afford, for the uſe of the regular army, a quota of men proportionate to the number fit to carry arms in each, we are much more likely to remove thoſe fooliſh national ideas and prejudices, which at preſent ſow the ſeeds of diſcontent and diſunion in all the component parts of the empire. I am confident, Sir, that the Iriſh and Americans would accede to the terms of a naval and military union with Great Britain, as the moſt honourable and general idea to remove all jealouſy in commercial concerns. The plan ſuggeſted in this tract for recruiting the Britiſh army, which is calculated to produce this effect, is founded upon the ſame principles as that of parliamentary repreſentation; whatever arguments are therefore applicable to the one, may *a fortiori* be applied to the other.

When the land-tax, Sir, is appropriated for the ſupport of the Britiſh navy, according to

the plan ſpecified in the preceding letter, it is evident, the militia of each county muſt be ſupported from ſome other reſources of taxation. The fixing of theſe, ſhould be left to the determination of each county or diſtrict. This plan throws the whole expence of the militia-eſtabliſhment as to daily ſupport, upon the reſpective counties or diſtricts they belong to, which would be attended with the following conſequences.

1ſt. It would enable each county or diſtrict by a jury of their own inhabitants, to agree upon ſuch aſſeſſments or modes of taxation as are moſt ſuitable to the natural riches of it, whether they conſiſt in agriculture or commerce.

2dly. Each county or diſtrict might then have the power during war or peace, to increaſe or diminiſh the pay of their reſpective corps of militia, according to the preſent employment of them, viz. Whether they are called out to the general duty of the camp, or employed in works

works of a public nature in the particular county or diſtrict they belong to.

3dly. It is evident, that the inhabitants of each county or diſtrict, are the beſt judges of their own reſources of taxation—Theſe might ariſe from taking the management of the high roads into their own hands, and employing their militia upon that ſervice, or any other work of a public nature—from licenſing annually retailers in trade univerſally, leaving the merchant and manufacturer free—from a tax, increaſing in the ratio of each perſon's landed or moneyed fortune, this to be computed by a jury of their own inhabitants, upon the moſt liberal and equitable principles.

4thly. By leaving the ſupport of the militia to the determination of the inhabitants of each county or diſtrict, both in regard to the ratio of their pay, and the mode of aſſeſſment or tax uſed in levying it, it will excite an emulation for the internal defence of each part of the Britiſh

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dominions among gentlemen of fortune. 1ſt. By inducing them to ſerve without pay or emolument, when the expence of maintaining their reſpective corps falls upon themſelves. 2dly. By exciting an emulation among the inhabitants of each county or diſtrict, to increaſe the eſtabliſhment of their reſpective corps of militia according to the danger or exigencies of the ſtate. Every idea or plan, Sir, that ſtrengthens the internal military ſyſtem of each country upon patriotic principles, will meet with encouragement and ſupport from the Engliſh as a brave and generous people. If the inhabitants of Ireland are able to raiſe ſo large a military force to defend their country in point of aſſociation, certainly ſo rich and opulent a kingdom as England, could with eaſe raiſe twice the number *. A proper eſthbliſhment of ſuch an idea

* Military aſſociations in imitation of Ireland have lately been recommended by Lord Shelburne to the various counties and towns of this country. It ſeems probable, that the attention of England is more fixed upon the increaſe of the navy as an external defence; whereas Ireland and Scotland ſeem to pay more attention to their internal ſtate of defence.

idea in Great Britain as in Ireland, would render us invulnerable at home, and enable government to detach our fleets more abroad, to protect our commercial intereſts in diſtant parts of the globe.

I ſhall conclude this letter, Sir, with a propoſal that tends greatly to ſtrengthen the internal military force of Great Britain, viz. That the money now levied in London and its *environs* for the maintenance of watchmen, ſhould be appropriated to the purpoſe of eſtabliſhing a proper military watch. Theſe men being under military law, would be much more careful and attentive when upon duty than they are at preſent. Leſs money would then be required to pay and clothe them, than according to their preſent eſtabliſhment. Theſe corps ſhould be compoſed of ſtout men who have at leaſt ſerved ten years in the regular army, able to do their duty, and not of old infirm men, who ſhould more properly be ſent to Chelſea hoſpital, than be employed in the watch and ſafeguard of ſo great

great a city as London. If the ſame idea were extended upon a ſmaller ſcale to all the principal towns in Great Britain, it wonld add greatly to the internal force of the kingdom; ſince ten thouſand men might be ſupported upon ſuch an eſtabliſhment. The command of ſuch men ſhould belong to the ſheriff of each county, and the appointment to the commander in chief of the regular army. It is abſolutely neceſſary that theſe men ſhonld have ſerved a certain time in the regular army, to teach them proper ideas of ſubordination and diſcipline. In regard to aſſociations theſe men would ſerve as inferior officers, to teach the common men their manual exerciſe; which inſtitution would fully anſwer all the purpoſes intended by Lord Barrington's plan of aſſociation, to prevent private property being pillaged by the diſaffected in caſe of an invaſion, when the regulars and militia are called from the internal parts of the kingdom to the defence of the ſea-coaſt.

As the ſheriff of each county would have the command

command of ſuch men, ſimilar in ſome degree to the Maréchauſſé of France, ſo he has it in his power according to the nature of the neceſſity, to put what arms he pleaſes in their hands. The late diſturbances and riots in London ſhow, that the common civil power is inadequate to the purpoſe of ſuppreſſing or reſtraining ſuch. There is likewiſe a particular advantage attending ſuch an inſtitution as the one here propoſed, that in caſe of a repetition of ſuch diſturbances as lately happened in London, watchmen acting in the character of a military force as here propoſed, will be much more likely to diſcover the ringleaders of ſuch riots, from their general knowledge of the haunts and perſons of moſt men reſident in the metropolis.

The author of theſe letters by no means preſumes to lay them before the publick, as faultleſs or unexceptionable. His object and intention in writing them, was to fix the attention of others to ſuch ſubjects, that in the multiplicity of abler counſel, national wiſdom and exertion might

might be the reſult. It has long been a common and weak prejudice to contraſt the intereſts of the navy, againſt the intereſts of the army. The folly of which is expoſed in the above letters by proving, that at preſent, the conſtitutions of neither are fixed upon ſuch principles, as are calculated to call forth the utmoſt exertions this country is capable of in time of war. This ſubject merits attention as a point of publick finance, ſince one real vigorous campaign will ſave more money to this country, than all the late objects of pecuniary reformation that have cauſed ſo much heat and debate in parliament.

POSTCRIPT *to Letter firſt.*

To promote and make general the deſign of the county of *Suffolk* and Sir JAMES LOWTHER for increaſing the navy of this country at preſent, it is proper to communicate the following hint to the Publick——That a naval brief ought now to be read in all Churches and Chapels, &c. &c.

&c. throughout Great Britain and Ireland; the Subſcriptions for which ſhould be collected in the different Pariſhes from houſe to houſe, each Subſcriber ſpecifying his name.—It is ſincerely hoped by the Author of theſe Letters, that the ſucceſs of ſuch a meaſure might ſhew to our enemies a real attachment to the welfare and increaſe of our navy, abſtracted from all party and faction.

FINIS.